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ABSTRACT

This document contains the instructional materials developed and presented in workshops on communications skills improvement at a regional hospital. The workshop was designed to help participants gain skills that enable them to do the following: (1) identify and overcome roadblocks to effective communication; (2) decode "hidden messages"; (3) recognize the importance of the three main ways messages are sent; (4) avoid provoking hostility through non-defensive communication; (5) practice effective listening skills; (6) use reflection skills; (7) choose appropriate words to transmit a message clearly; (8) give criticism appropriately; and (9) use "I" messages to communicate assertively. The guide includes a workshop overview, information sheets, work sheets, and role-playing activities. (KC)

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ED 379 515

The Visions Program of Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College

Presents
A
Communication Skills Enhancement Workshop

for
The Patient Management Department
at
TRMC

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The Essence of Communication Is Intention.....

CE068 366

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The Regional Medical Center

Introduction

Essential to job performance and job satisfaction are the skills involved in building effective working relationships with supervisors, supervisees, and co-workers. Knowing how to communicate clearly, disagree amiably, manage conflict, and stay in control emotionally are skills that help increase ones' self-confidence and productivity on the job.

As a result of this training, participants will gain skills to better enable them to:

Identify and overcome roadblocks to effective communication
Decode "hidden messages we send others (and they send us)
Recognize the importance of the 3 main ways we send messages
Avoid provoking hostility through non-defensive communication
Practice effective listening skills
Use reflection skills to provide feedback to a speaker
Choose appropriate words to transmit a message clearly
Give criticism appropriately
Use "I" messages to assertively communicate

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.— Henry Ford

The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live.— Mortimer Adler

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"The content of the "Communication Skills Enhancement Workshop" were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government."

Communication in the Workplace

It is important to have good communication skills in the workplace so that you can:

*feel confident in your interactions
*work successfully as a team member
*relate well with the public
*understand directions
*communicate with supervisory personnel
*communicate with co-workers.

This workshop will include the following skills:

I. What's Your C.Q.?
II. You Are Your Word
III. A Communication Skill Survey
IV. Non-Verbal Communication Exercises
    A. Body Language
    B. Positive/Negative Communication Skills
V. Listening Skills
VI. Role Playing ("Dealing With The Angry Public")
VII. Communication in Retrospect
VIII. Communication Gaps
    A. Paraphrasing
    B. Blocks
IX. Evaluations
    A. Non-Verbal
    B. Positive/Negative
X. Conclusion

What's Your C.Q.?

Communication is one of the buzzwords of the 90's. Nonetheless, while we're quick to acknowledge how important good communication is, we often have a hard time spotting problems in our own communication styles. How many of the following communication barriers are keeping you from being an effective communicator?

1. Hearing Only What You Expect to Hear

When dealing with the day-to-day functions of a job, do you assume that the supervisor or one of your co-workers is speaking to you, do you fall into the habit of simply nodding your head with a knowing smile because you know what they're going to say? You may consciously or unconsciously ignore information you don't expect to hear. A classic example of this is the standard greeting. "How are you?" Do you really listen to the answer, or do you expect the response to always be "fine"?

2. Becoming Confused by Conflicting Information

Sometimes what we hear isn't consistent with our preconceptions of the speaker. When we hear a message that conflicts with our beliefs, our beliefs usually override the message and we end up validating inaccurate perceptions.

3. Letting Biases Interfere

It is unfortunate, but biases exist in every aspect of our relationships. If we like some people, we're more likely to listen to what they have to say than if we dislike them. In fact, we more readily accept from those we like and respect.

4. Semantics

It's often said that the English language is very difficult to learn because of the great number of words with similar meanings. Even native English speakers often experience misunderstandings.

What do the phrases "She's got a good track record," and "I couldn't get to first base," mean to you. What might these same phrases mean to an athletic coach?

5. Noise

Internal or external noise is a major cause of poor communication, since we process information at a much faster pace than a person can deliver the information, it's easy to find our minds wandering. This is even more likely to happen as we're bombarded on all sides by competing "noise."

6. Emotions

Our feelings and mood significantly impact on how well we listen. If we're relaxed we'll absorb more. If we had a rough day or have a million other things on our minds we won't pay close attention to what's being said to us.

*For each of the above six barriers you recognize in yourself, add 5 points to your score.

Communicating Non-Defensively

Are you communicating defensively, causing discomfort both to yourself and those who approach you? To find out, ask yourself these questions:

1) Have you ever been told, "You're being defensive"?
2) Do you frequently find yourself in verbal battles with your supervisor or co-workers?
3) Do you sometimes feel challenged or threatened by others?

If you answered "yes" to even one of the above questions, you may be communicating defensively. Give yourself 5 points for each question you answered "yes."?

We all react defensively on occasion. It's the chronic outbursts of defensiveness that can be devastating to your interpersonal interactions and your career.

What to do about it? Here are five easy steps to non-defensive communication:

Don't expect to be understood. When you're communicating with others the onus is on you to make yourself clear. If you're not being understood, it's not the other person's fault - it's yours.

Depersonalize. The reason most of us behave defensively is because we perceive our competence being challenged. When you feel yourself turning defensive (and most of us recognize our own defensiveness signs), step outside the situation. Take an objective look at what's going on. Ask yourself:
-What's the issue here?
-As an outsider, how would I interpret the problem?
-What can I do to solve the problem?

Don't provoke defensive interactions. Some people seem to invite defensive behavior from others and then, in turn, react defensively themselves. Some common defense-provoking statements are:

"You're wrong."
"Why did you do that?"
"You can't be serious!"
"Do you expect me to believe that?"

There are many more. Even tone of voice can trigger a defensive reaction. Listen for defensive-provoking statements in others and guard for them in yourself.

Think before you speak. So many of us speak before we think. It's better to speak deliberately and consider what you're going to say (especially if it's a potentially inflammatory comment) than to run off at the mouth and be consistently involved in verbal battles.

Take some "time out." If defensiveness has a firm hold on you, the best thing to do is to move out of the situation. Schedule a time to get back together - a time that will allow you a cooling off period. Give yourself a breather during an especially volatile interchange. Say, I'll need to think about that. Let me get back to you." Above all, don't rise to the bait. Be on the lookout for signs of defensiveness in yourself and others. Learn to communicate offensively.

Recognizing Non-Verbal Clues

While the spoken word is a major mode of communication, it is by no means the only one. Nonverbal communication also plays a vital role. Some of the most common types of nonverbal behavior and their messages are familiar to us all: A nod of the head, a wave of the hand, a frown. "Reading" non-verbal clues (and

reading them correctly) can be tricky. How good are your non-verbal communication skills?

Try this situation on for size: If I see someone I recognize and she doesn't acknowledge my greeting I...
a) Feel snubbed and vow not to acknowledge her the next time.
b) Yell, "Hey! What's your problem?"
c) Assume she didn't see or hear me. I either proceed with my business or repeat the greeting.
d) Give the person a call later saying, "I was disturbed today when you didn't acknowledge my comments to you at the club meeting. You seemed preoccupied. Is it something I could help with?"

Misunderstandings occur when we attempt to interpret non-verbal clues without checking our perceptions with the person we're observing. Add 5 points to your score if you answered "a" or "b."

Next, respond to the following statements by saying, "Yes, I do," or "No, I don't." Give yourself 5 points for every statement you answered "no."

*If I'm unsure of how to react to a situation, I'll take the lead from the other person.
*I try to be a good observer without "jumping to conclusions." I always check out my perceptions before acting on them.
*I try to find out the background of a situation. For instance, if I walked in on some club members and they all looked upset, I would say, "You all look upset. What's happening?"
*I understand that emotions are fleeting and that many facial expressions are really blends of two or more feelings.
*I try to find out how my behavior is affecting others. I make a conscious effort to get feedback on my own nonverbal clues.

Your C.Q.

How did you do? There are a total of 75 points possible. The lower your score, the better communicator you are.

Good communication is vital in many relationships. The art of positive communication requires both motivation and skill. It's up to you to make that effort and increase your communication quotient.

You Are Your Word

There are over four and a half billion people on planet Earth. We live on different continents, in different nations, and communicate with different languages. We have diverse political ideologies and enjoy different foods. We choose divergent lifestyles and subscribe to various social and moral codes. However, the fundamental element that prevents confusion and disorder despite all of these differences is **AGREEMENT!** Obviously, then, the world works by agreement.

Words, our basic tool of communication, work only because of agreement. A pencil is a pencil simply because we all agree to call this wood-covered column of graphite a pencil. We could just as easily call a pencil a stick. We need only to make this an agreement. We are able to communicate with words by agreeing with their meanings.

Even money exist by agreement. Suppose someone finds a torn piece of newspaper with ink on it and leaves it in TRMC's Emergency Room next to a $20 bill (another piece of paper with ink on it), one of them will quickly disappear. The only important difference between the two pieces of paper is our agreement that one is valuable and the other is valueless. We agree that one piece of paper can be exchanged for goods and services. TRMC and others will provide services for that $20 bill because they trust this as a continuing agreement. Actually society functions because of agreements. If agreement is essential to society's working, then it is also essential to our lives working. In fact, our lives work to the degree that we keep our agreements.

However, the cost of not keeping an agreement is high. When we fail to agree we often feel ineffective. We may even experience a psychological upset, interpersonal conflict, or social turmoil. When we break our promise to pay a bill to TRMC or when we fail to be faithful to our spouse as we agreed previously, the results are often messy. Strained relationships and painful consequences simply indicate that something in our life does not work.

If however, we start with our most intimate personal contacts and move through various levels with family, friends, co-workers, business, community, and nation, we'd find that keeping our agreement usually brings satisfaction and harmony - for all!.

We need only to continuously be mindful of the fact that the person we are right now is a result of all the choices we've made in our lives until now. Our future will be determined by these choices/agreements that we make henceforth.

We must also be cautious about giving our word. We must not make agreements unless we fully intend to keep them. Then keep these agreements as if our life depended on them, because it does!

Too, one must always be clear about the difference between "I'll try to do it, and "I give you my word that I'll do it." Trying to do something reserves a convenient excuse for not getting it done. "I tried" usually means "I failed." For example, a wide receiver either caught the ball or he tried to catch it. There's always a difference.

Remember, when you break an agreement, you should examine your intention continuously. A part of you wants to keep the agreement. Sure you didn't keep your word as promised, another part of you resisted it. When you genuinely and completely choose to do something, internal resistance disappears.

Everyone, however, breaks agreements. The only way to make certain you won't break an agreement is not to **make any**! The problem is that relationships are built on agreements. Others know who you are, and what to expect, by your intentions, commitments, and agreements. Your word defines your values and beliefs. You can learn who you are by observing which commitments you choose and which ones you avoid.

Nonetheless, when you communicate your intentions and purpose or give your word, you are engaged in and act of creation.....literally. Words and language bring your intentions into existence. Until you commit yourself to something by giving your word, there is little chance that you will follow through.

Remember always, your word and your agreement make things happen. Circumstances, events and even attitudes, fall into place. Information and assistance appear as a result of commitment. Everything starts with your word!

Communication Skills Survey

Directions: Complete the following survey as quickly as you can without talking to anyone. Please answer all questions Honestly! There are no right or wrong answers.

Check yes, if your answer is Yes/most of the time. Check no, if your answer is NO/seldom or/never.

	Yes (Most of the time)	No (Seldom/never)
1. Do you have difficulty talking with other people?	_____	_____
2. Do you have difficulty accepting criticism?	_____	_____
3. Do you agree with others because you are afraid they will be angry if you don't?	_____	_____
4. Do others say that you always seem to think that you are right?	_____	_____
5. When you know that you are wrong about something, do you admit it?	_____	_____
6. In conversation, do you let the other person finish talking before you reply?	_____	_____
7. Do you pretend you are listening when you actually are not?	_____	_____
8. Do you usually assume that others understand what you are saying without explaining?	_____	_____
9. Do you try to understand others?	_____	_____
10. While speaking, are you aware of how others are reacting to you?	_____	_____

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

Dealing With the Angry Public

Listed below are examples and rules that one must follow when dealing with an angry member of society.

What you should do if a person is angry	Example
Listen carefully to the angry person.	Look at the eyes of the person, nod your head, use facial expressions.
Don't take the anger personally, even if the angry person blames you.	Say to yourself: "This person is not angry at me. The poor service has upset him."
Say something to the person to show that you understand his/her anger.	"I understand that you're very upset!
Indicate some action that you will take or ask your supervisor to take.	"I will see my supervisor right now and ask her/him to help you.

True/False: Indicate if the following skills are true or false.

1._____ The first thing to do with an angry person is listen.

2._____ Arguing with people is the best thing to do because it shows you take them seriously.

3._____ It is best to say nothing to people after they show anger. Otherwise, you could make them more angry by what you say.

4._____ It is always a good idea to tell angry people that you will take some action to handle the problem that is making them angry.

5._____ To reduce a person's anger, tell him/her that you will act on the problem immediately.

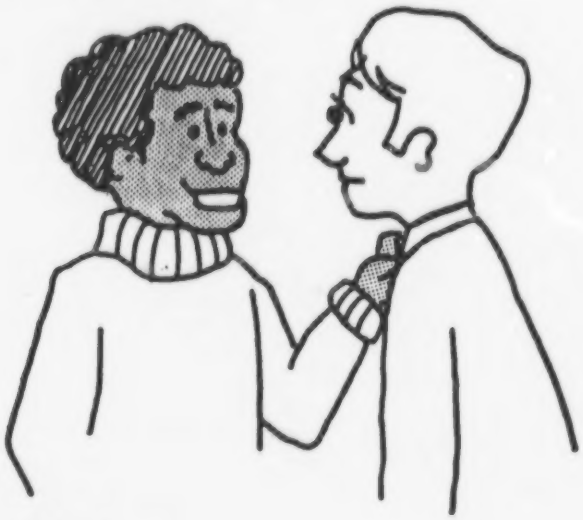
6._____ If people are waiting in line for a long time, try not to look at them because they might yell at you. It's not your fault, anyway.

7._____ Even if the problem is not your fault, you should say that you are very sorry that it happened.

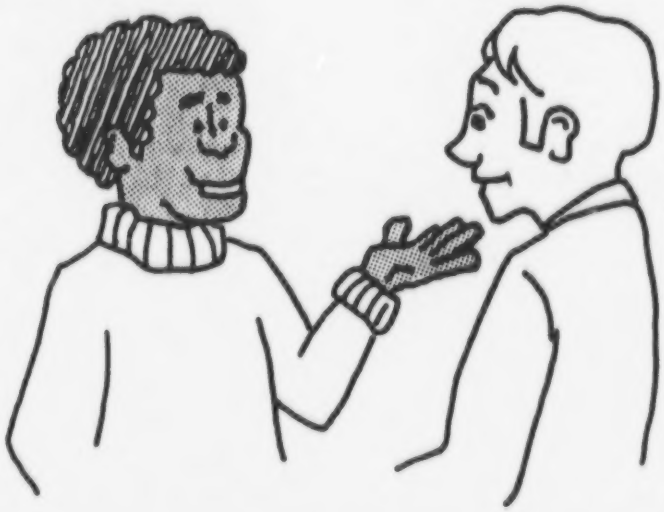
Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

Eye Contact

Look the speaker in the eye . . .



but don't stare!

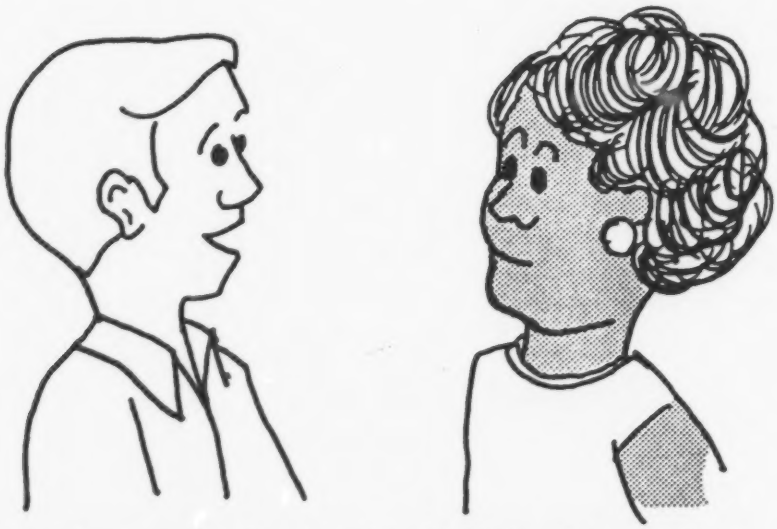


Eye contact means that you and the speaker exchange glances. Changes in the speaker's facial expression help you understand what the person is saying.

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

Following

Paying attention means more than just using your ears and eyes . . .



It means becoming actively involved with the speaker.

Let the speaker know you are listening by nodding when you agree, or laughing or smiling at a joke. You may also comment on what the other person says, ask questions, or summarize what you think the other person has said.

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

Attentive Posture

Turn your body toward the speaker. Be aware of what is happening here and now. Be relaxed . . .

but not too relaxed!

Lean slightly toward the speaker, but be comfortable. Show the other person you are truly listening, not just waiting for your turn to speak.

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

Send A Positive Attitude By Your

Body Language

Body Language usually accounts for more than half of the messages you communicate.

Listed below is a body language checklist. Check the square if you answer "Yes" to each question.

[ ] Do you hold your head high and steady?

[ ] Are your facial muscles relaxed and under control?

[ ] Do you find it easy to maintain eye contact with people you are talking to?

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

Positive Uses of Non-Verbal Communication

1. Gain the attention of the listener by looking the person directly in the eye and by giving them a firm handshake.

2. Show a genuine interest in what is being said ---- use proper posture and appropriate gestures.

3. Express your trustworthiness and honesty by a nod of the head, by looking the person in the eye.

4. Express your attitude toward yourself, your message, and toward your listener by your attentiveness to their conversation ---- don't interrupt with distractive body movements.

5. Express your confidence in yourself by your dress.

6. Express your enthusiasm for the job by your dress, attentiveness and mannerisms.

7. Direct attention to other people in the room by directing the message to them also.

8. Reinforce your message.

9. Open the lines of communication between you and the listener.

Negative Non-Verbal Communication

1. Indirect eye contact.

2. Nervous body mannerism ---- shifting from foot to foot, clicking a pen or constantly clearing the throat.

3. Poor posture (sitting/standing).

4. Inappropriate dress.

5. Inattention to the speaker ---- eyes wandering around the room instead of listening to the speaker ..... shifting eyes.

6. Gestures or non-verbal behavior that contradict oral or verbal messages.

7. Leaning away from the listener.

8. Folding your arms in front of your body, commonly regarded as a defensive posture.

9. Inappropriate body scent ---- foul odor, too much perfume/after shave lotion.

Listening Skills

One of the most important parts of communication is listening. Poor listening habits are usually the cause of communication problems. Rate your listening habits on the scale below by circling one of the numbers (1-5) after each item.

	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Not Usually	Hardly Ever
1. After a short period of listening, I start thinking about what I'm going to say next.	1	2	3	4	5
2. If I don't like the person, I don't really listen to what he/she is saying.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I interrupt others before they finish talking.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I fake attention.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I talk mostly about myself.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I ask questions.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I give other people a chance to talk.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I try to see things from the other person's point of view.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I maintain good eye contact when listening.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I get so busy taking notes I miss some of what's said.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I get distracted easily.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I let my mind wander or I daydream when someone is talking.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

ADD THE CIRCLED NUMBERS FOR YOUR SCORE:_____

If your score is:	45 - 60	You are a **good listener** and probably make few mistakes at work. More than likely people enjoy talking to you and being with you.
	31 - 44	You need to improve listening skills. This will more than likely improve your job performance.
	12 - 30	You are a **poor listener**. You probably lost some friends or made careless mistakes at work because of your poor listening habits.

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

How To Be A Good Listener

1. Stop Talking!
   You can't listen if you're talking.

2. Put The Speaker At Ease.
   Help the speaker feel free to talk. Provide what is often called a "permissive environment."

3. Show The Speaker That You Want to Listen.
   Look and act interested. Do not read your mail when someone is talking. Listen to understand rather than to reply.

4. Remove Distractions.
   Don't doodle, tap, or shuffle papers. Shut the door if it will be quieter.

5. Empathize With The Speaker
   Try to put yourself in the speaker's place so that you can understand the point of view.

6. Be Patient.
   Allow plenty of time. Don't interrupt. Don't start for the door or walk away during the conversation..

7. Hold Your Temper.
   An angry person gets the wrong meaning from words.

8. Go Easy on Argument/Criticism.
   Do not put the speaker on the defensive. The speaker may "clam up" or get angry. Try not to argue; even if you <u>win</u>, you <u>lose</u>!

9. Ask Questions.
   Encourage the speaker and show that you are listening. Questions also help to develop further points.

10. STOP TALKING!
    This is the first and last skill, because all other listening skills depend upon it. You can not do good listening when you are talking.

Nature gave people two ears but only one tongue, which is a gentle hint that listening is more important than talking!

The Major Benefits of Good Listening are:

* Good listeners can make better decisions
* Good listeners save time
* Listening helps the speaker determine how well the message is received
* Good listeners stimulate others to speak better
* Good listening decreases misunderstanding

Listening To The Sound of Your Own Voice

The tone of voice that you use with others may mean the difference between:

1. Adequate customer service and quality customer service
2. Acceptable job success and great job success

Directions: Listed below are different voice styles. Which style best describes yours? Check the one(s) with which you identify most.

* [ ] My voice becomes agitated and/loud when I am angry.
* [ ] I speak quickly when I am nervous.
* [ ] My voice slows significantly/become quieter when I get tired.
* [ ] Others describe my tone of voice as "upbeat."
* [ ] Friends regard my voice as warm and understanding when we are in a serious conversation.
* [ ] I can control my voice in most situations.
* [ ] My voice can sound authoritarian and demanding when required.
* [ ] Many consider my voice meek.
* [ ] I am lucky because my voice is clear, direct and natural.
* [ ] My vocabulary and style of speaking tends to be serious and scholarly.

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

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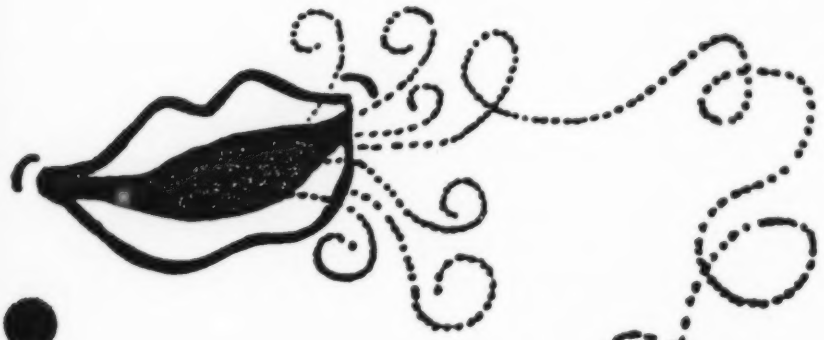
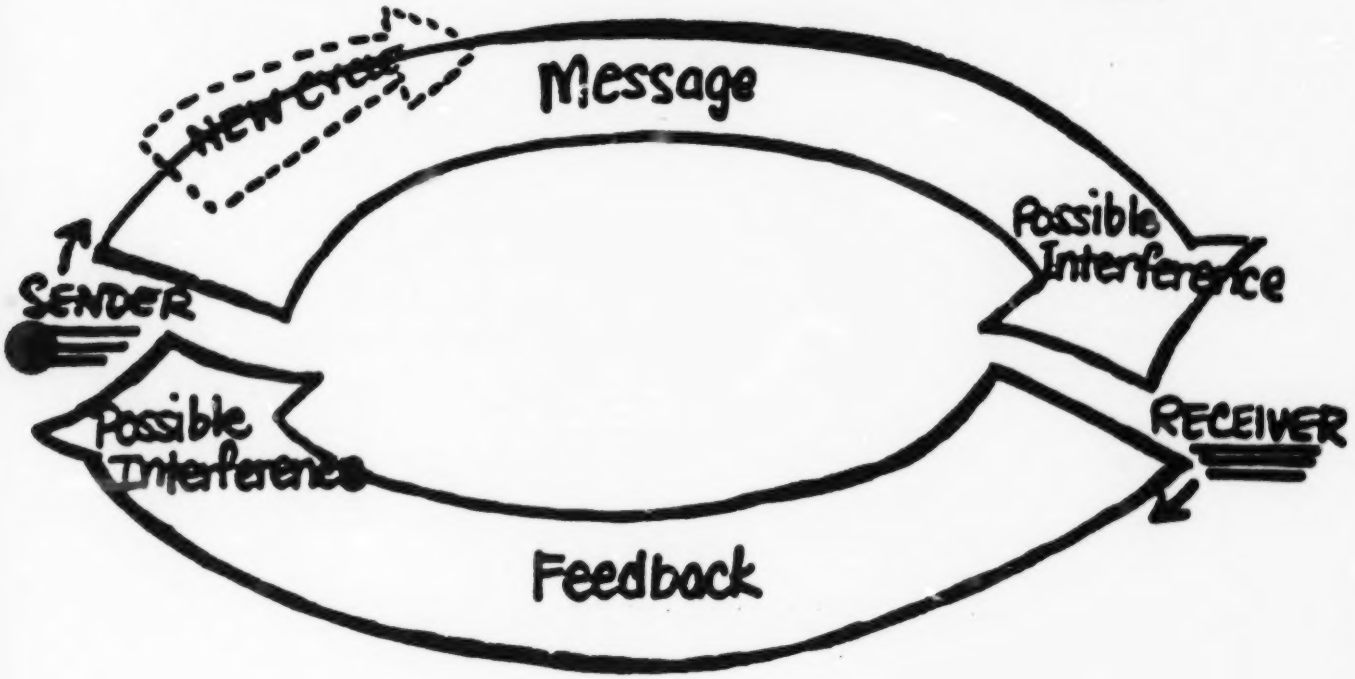
What is Communication?



the process of understanding and sharing meaning.

The Communication Process



What is listening?

The process of receiving and interpreting a message.

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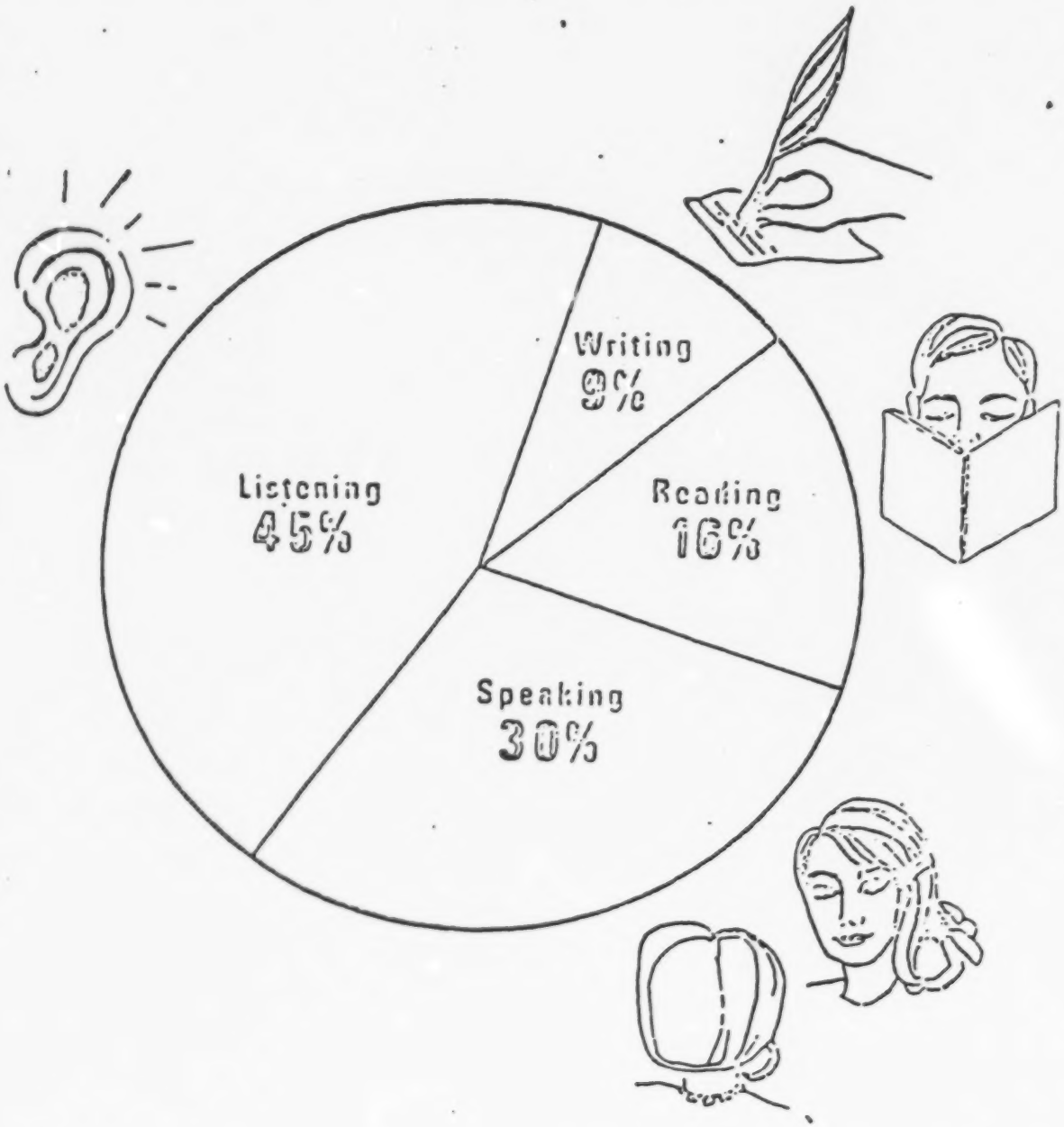
COMMUNICATIONS

As Supervisors We Spend Up To 70% Of Our Time Communicating. This Time Is Divided As Follows:



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WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT LISTENING SKILLS

Ten faulty assumptions about listening are listed below. Read each carefully and check ones that you have previously held.

Don't forget to read carefully the correct assumptions about listening.

FAULTY ASSUMPTIONS	CORRECT ASSUMPTIONS
___1. We learn to listen automatically; training is unnecessary.	Effective listening is a skill that is difficult for most of us. Practice and training can improve our ability to listen well.
___2. Listening ability depends on intelligence.	There is no relationship between intelligence and listening skills.
___3. Listening ability is closely related to hearing.	Ability to hear is a physical phenomenon. It has little to do with our ability to listen. In fact, people with hearing loss, often make extremely effective listeners.
___4. Generally, most of us can listen well and read something else at the same time.	This is a skill few, if any, people can do effectively.
___5. We listen well most of the time.	Unfortunately, most of us need to work on improving our listening skills.
___6. What we hear is usually what was said.	As human beings, we have a natural tendency to filter information we hear. All too often, what we hear is not what was said.
___7. Listening is a passive action.	Listening is an active process. It requires our participation and involvement.
___8. Personality has little effect on listening ability.	Our personality plays an important role in how well we listen.
___9. Listening is done only through the ears.	Effective listening is done with the whole body. Proper eye contact and body posture can facilitate effective listening.
___10. Listening should be concerned with content first and feelings second.	Feelings are often more important than the words themselves. We must look for the underlying feelings in messages. They are often the REAL message.

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

Self - Esteem Evaluation

Score as follows:

"3"	True	"1"	Somewhat true
"2"	Largely true	"0"	Not true

POINTS	Statement of Present Condition or Action
_____	1. I usually do my own thinking and make my own decisions.
_____	2. I often justify or rationalize my mistakes and defeats.
_____	3. I rarely experience envy, jealousy, or suspicion.
_____	4. Losing usually causes me to feel "less than."
_____	5. I normally let others be "wrong" without attempting to correct them.
_____	6. I am very concerned about what others think of me.
_____	7. I am free of guilt, shame, and remorse.
_____	8. I feel vulnerable to others' opinions, attitudes, and comments.
_____	9. I am not prejudiced toward religious, racial, or ethnic groups.
_____	10. I tend to look down on my own achievements and talents.
_____	11. I willingly accept the consequences of my actions.
_____	12. I often exaggerate and lie to maintain a desired image.
_____	13. I normally feel warm and friendly toward all people.
_____	14. I usually feel inadequate to handle a new or changing situation.
_____	15. I freely express love, hostility, joy, anger.
_____	16. I am very often belittling or critical of others.
_____	17. I am normally poised and comfortable with new people.
_____	18. I try hard to please people.
_____	19. I speak up for my own opinions and convictions.
_____	20. I have a strong need for recognition and approval.
_____	21. I normally anticipate new endeavors with positive expectancy and confidence.
_____	22. I often brag about myself and my achievements.
_____	23. I accept my own authority and do what I think is right.
_____	24. I am often embarrassed by the actions of my family or associates.
_____	25. I accept compliments and gifts without embarrassment.

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

HERE'S HOW TO SCORE THE SELF-ESTEEM EVALUATION:

1. ADD UP TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS FOR THE 13 ODD-NUMBERED QUESTIONS.

2. DO THE SAME FOR THE EVEN-NUMBERED QUESTIONS.

3. SUBTRACT THE "EVEN" TOTAL FROM THE "ODD" TOTAL.

4. SCORES COULD RANGE FROM -36 TO +39.

5. PERFECT SELF-ESTEEM WOULD MEAN STRAIGHT 3'S ON THE ODD AND STRAIGHT O'S ON THE EVEN.

6. THE SCORE IS REALLY NOT IMPORTANT. EVERYTHING IS RELEVANT, AND THIS TEST ONLY GIVES YOU A GOOD FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR YOUR BECOMING A "CREATIVE ACHIEVER."

7. MAKE A NOTATION BY THE ODD-NUMBERED QUESTIONS WHERE YOU SCORED 1 OR 0; AND BY THE EVEN NUMBERS WHERE YOU SCORED 3 OR 2. (THESE COULD LIKELY BE AREAS FOR EXTRA EFFORT, IN ORDER TO GROW.)

The Stress Test

With the pace of life today, one thing that touches all of us is change. We move frequently; we change jobs; we hurry all day long. We send the children off to college; change spouses; have our taxes raised; lose old friends and make new ones.

All these events- good and bad - extract a penalty in the form of stress. And depending on how much stress you encounter, your health could be affected. The following test was developed by psychologists to help predict (and perhaps prevent) physical problems that can result from too much change -- and stress in your life.

Think of what has happened to you in the past year as you read through the test. Jot down the point values for events that apply to you in the column at the right, then add up your score. If your total for the year is under 150, you probably won't have any adverse reaction. A score of 150-199 indicates a "mild" problem, with a 37 percent chance you'll feel the impact of stress with physical symptoms. From 200 to 299, you qualify as having a "moderate" problem with a 51 percent chance of experiencing a change in your health. And a score of over 300 could really threaten your well-being.

If your score alarms you, do something about it. Postpone a move, or a job change, or even go on a diet (any change that's under your control) until your score settles down.

LIFE EVENT	Point Value	Your Score (insert values from column at left)
1. Death of spouse	100	_____
2. Divorce	73	_____
3. Marital separation	65	_____
4. Jail term	63	_____
5. Death of close family member	63	_____
6. Personal injury or illness	53	_____
7. Marriage	50	_____
8. Fired at work	47	_____
9. Marital reconciliation	45	_____
10. Retirement	45	_____

10. Retirement	45	_____
11. Change in health of family member	44	_____
12. Pregnancy	40	_____
13. Sex difficulties	39	_____
14. Gain of new family member	39	_____
15. Business readjustment	39	_____
16. Change in financial state	38	_____
17. Death of a close friend	37	_____
18. Change to different line of work	36	_____
19. Change in responsibilities at work	35	_____
20. Mortgage over $10,000	31	_____
21. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	_____
22. Change in responsibilities at home	29	_____
23. Son or daughter leaving home	29	_____
24. Trouble with in-laws	29	_____
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28	_____
26. Wife begin or stop work	26	_____
27. Change in living conditions	25	_____
28. Revision of personal habits	24	_____
29. Trouble with boss	23	_____
30. Change in work hours or conditions	20	_____
31. Change in residence	20	_____
32. Change in recreation	19	_____
33. Change in church activities	19	_____
34. Change in social activities	18	_____
35. Mortgage or loan less than $10,000	17	_____
36. Change in sleeping habits	16	_____
37. Change in number of family get-togethers	15	_____
38. Change in eating habits	15	_____
39. Vacation	13	_____
40. Christmas	12	_____
41. Minor violations of the law	11	_____
YOUR TOTAL		_____

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

Stress

Stress-- A Dirty Word?

Believe it or not, not all stress is bad for you. people are more conscious now than ever before about the negative effects too much stress can place on their bodies, mistakenly believe that all stress is bad. While stress is related to physical as ulcers, colitis, hypertension and heart disease - as well as emotional problems - stress can also be found in many of life's happiest and most exciting moments: winning a Caribbean cruise, getting married or having a baby, for example. Stress is a spice of life --something not to avoid entirely, but to master and use.

What Is Stress?

Stress is the body's response to "stressors" --anything that is threatening, or causes pressures or strains on the body. Stressors, whether environmental (external), or psychological (internal), cause the body to surge with hormones, especially adrenalin. The heart beats faster, respiration quickens, blood pressure and blood sugar rise, muscles tense --all preparing the body for "fight or flight" --or in effect, some type of action. These responses are very useful for confronting physical dangers, but potentially harmful over time as response to psychological pressures.

When Is Too Much Stress Too Much?

Since everyone has different ways of coping with the problems and pleasures in life, different people thrive on different amounts of stress. There are both physical and behavioral symptoms, however, which characterize the effects of too much negative stress. Some of them include: *Persistent headaches, backaches, stomachaches, tense or cramped muscles.

*Insomnia - trouble falling or staying asleep. Even though
*Listlessness - lack of energy.
*Lack of interest in leisure activities or socializing with friends. some also
*Persistent feelings of resentment or anger. illnesses such
*Feeling overwhelmed by things to do -- not being able to organize time effectively.

Coping With Stress

A certain amount of stress in life is inevitable;learning how to gain control of stress through the following suggestions can be the first step in developing effective coping techniques.

Breathe deeply when you're tense, from the diaphragm through the nostrils, inhaling for seven seconds, exhaling for eight (repeat 10 times).
Take a break when you need some breathing space. Go for a walk, read a book or magazine, see a movie. If you can't get away, daydream for a while: imagine yourself basking in the sun or soaking in a hot tub.
Get if off your chest by talking about your problems. Keeping problems to yourself can increase stress. Turn to a trusted friend orcounselor who will listen, give support and offer an objective opinion.
Learn to relax with mediation, yoga, biofeedback or behavior modification.
Exercise regularly, whether it's a walk, swim, game of tennis or a bike ride. Regular exercise is one of the best ways to relieve tension.
Don't use alcohol or other drugs to cope with stress. The relief that they seem to provide is only temporary, and may result in dependence.

Causes of Stress

It is important to understand what things in your work --either at school or on a job --are causing problems. Once you know them, you can begin to make plans to change yourself or the situation. Put a check in front of any items that cause you stress.

Personal:

_____ I don't feel I'm a very good worker.
_____ I am always behind with my work.
_____ I dislike my job.
_____ There are other things I'd like to do at work.
_____ I don't get enough exercise.
_____ I don't have a healthy diet.
_____ I have no important interests outside of my job.
_____ Other:_____

Other people:

_____ Other people are favored over me.
_____ I have problems with supervisors.
_____ I don't like some of my co-workers.
_____ I am uncomfortable working with others.
_____ I am always fighting with someone.
_____ I am criticized too often.
_____ No one ever helps me.
_____ I am criticized in public.
_____ I get blamed when others don't do their job.
_____ Other:_____

Your place of work

_____ I don't like it because of the poor conditions (dirt, noise temperature, lighting).
_____ I don't have enough authority or responsibility.
_____ I have too much work to do.
_____ I always have the same kind of thing to do.
_____ I am always being asked to start a new task before the old one is finished.
_____ Other:_____

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

Exercise to Relieve Stress

1. Standing with your heels together, slowly bring your arms up to shoulder level with palms facing outwards. Now bring them down clasping your hands yourself. Make sure you don't bend forward when you do this. Now arch your body backwards and hold for 5 seconds, then bend forward from the waist and hold. While in this position, slightly bend left knee and step forward with your right foot. Hold, then repeat with right knee and left foot.

2. While sitting at your desk, put your elbows on the top and clasp your hands behind your head. Slowly bring head down until your chin rests on your chest. hold 5 seconds then bring your head up, keeping your elbows on the desk. Now twist your head, as far as it goes without straining, to the right with your right hand under your chin and the other behind your head. With your right hand twist your head just a little bit more, hold for 5 seconds then repeat in the other direction.
   Alternative: Close your eyes and roll your head in a complete circle, then repeat in the other direction.

3. Sitting in your chair, cross your right leg over your left knee. Grasp your right knee with your left hand and clasp the back of your chair with your right. Now twist your body, form the waist up, to your right. Make sure to turn your head in the same direction. Hold for 10 seconds, relax, then twist again to the right. Repeat this procedure in the opposite direction.

4. Sitting on the edge of your chair, extend your legs out in front of you. Clasp your calves with both hands. Bending your elbows outward, go down as low as you can and hold for 10 seconds. Straighten your elbows then slide your hands down and clasp your ankles. Again, bending your elbows outward, go down as far as you can and hold for 10 seconds.

You can find these exercises, and more, in Richard L. Hittleman's <u>Yoga for Personal Living.</u>

COMMUNICATION GAP

HOW TO COMMUNICATE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

Group Leader: The following ideas will help you communicate in your organization more effectively:

1. Listen carefully and ask for clarification when you are not sure that you have understood.

2. Be a positive influence in your organization. Do not repeat negative statements.

3. Be calm. Do not jump to conclusions about things which you have heard. If you have a concern, go to the original source.

4. Choose your words carefully, taking the listener's frame of reference and feelings into consideration.

5. Be honest in your communication. Try not to exaggerate or filter out information to make yourself look good.

Discuss these ideas in relation to the following questions:

1. Have you ever told something and had your words changed or misinterpreted? If so, how did you feel when this happened?

2. How may the above ideas be helpful in improving communication in your organization? Which ones does your group feel is most important?

3. Let each group member take a turn in sharing how he or she thinks he may try to improve communication skills.

REASONS FOR MISTAKES ON THE JOB

Group Leader: Read and discuss -

1. The biggest reason for confusion and mistakes in an organization is that people assume others understand, when in fact, they often do not. Do you agree? Why?

2. Have you ever had a conversation with someone who seemed preoccupied? How did you know he was not listening? How did you feel when this happened?

3. Are there certain people to whom you listen with more enthusiasm than others? Why? How about family members, subordinates, co-workers, superiors?

4. When people talk to you, do you sometimes find it hard to keep your mind on what they are saying? If so, what might be the reason?

5. When a person is talking to you, do you sometimes pretend that you are listening when you aren't? If so, why might this happen? What effect can it have?

An important way to improve communication is to give your undivided attention to the person speaking. Look at the person and let him know, non-verbally, that you are listening. Not only pay attention, but get involved with what is being said. Ask yourself, "What is this person trying to communicate to me?" Clarify by repeating in your own words what you think was said (feedback). You may want to say, "Am I understanding you to mean ....?" or "Let's see if I heard you correctly .....?" or "Are you saying that .....?"

When you give your full attention to another person and use feedback you are communicating, "I think you are an important person with valuable ideas, and I want to be sure that I hear what you are saying." Do you think people feel differently about a person who listens to them?

THE PRACTICE OF PARAPHRASING

Choose a partner and decide which of you is to speak first. Each of you will be a speaker (sender) and listener (receiver). The first speaker is to complete item #1 in 4 sentences. The listener repeats in his or her own words what the speaker has said (feedback). The speaker must be satisfied that he or she has been heard accurately. Then the listener becomes the sender and completes #1, while the first sender becomes the listener. After both persons have completed #1, move on to #2 until you are finished with #5. As you begin to paraphrase, you may want to say, "I think what I heard you say was...." or "Let me see if I understand what you have said...."

As an effective listener, you must give your undivided attention to the speaker. Use good eye contact, lean forward, uncross your arms and legs, use appropriate facial expressions, nod your head, and try to put yourself into the other person's place (empathy). A good listener does not interrupt and talks very little. If the speaker says only one sentence, the listener must wait silently and patiently until he is sure that the speaker is finished and ready for feedback.

#1 I would really like to .....

#2 Something I like about my work place is.....

#3 Something I would like to change about my work is.....

#4 I am proud of .....

#5 What I like most about myself is .....

Group Leader:

1. How did it feel to be listened to intently?

2. What were some of the problems encountered in this exercise?

3. How does this exercise relate to your professional life? Social life? Family life?

NOTES:

BLOCKS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Group Leader:

These are some responses that can block effective communication:

Evaluation Response. The phrases "You should ....," "Your duty.....," "You should know better," You are bad," "You are such a good person" creates blocks to communication. There is a time for evaluation, but if it is given too soon, the speaker usually becomes defensive.

Advice-Giving Response. "Why don't you try .....," "You'll feel better when.....," "It would be best for you....," "My advice is ....." are phrases that give advice. Advice is best given at the conclusion of conversations and generally only when one is asked.

Topping Response, or My Sore Thumb. "That's nothing, you should have seen ....," "When that happened to me, I ....," are phrases of "one-upmanship." This approach shifts attention from the person who wants to be listened to and leaves him or her feeling unimportant.

Diagnosing, Psychoanalytic Response. "What you need is .....," "The reason you feel the way you do is ....," "You don't really mean that," "Your problem is..," You don't tell others what they feel. Telling people how they feel or why they feel the way they do can be a two-edged sword. If the diagnoser is wrong, the speaker feels pressed; if the diagnoser is right, the speaker may feel exposed or captured. Most people do not want to be told how to feel and would rather volunteer their feelings than to have them exposed.

Prying-Questioning Response. "Why," "Who," "Where," "When," "How," "What" are responses common to us all. But such response tend to make the speaker feel "on the spot" and therefore resists the interrogation. At times, however, a questioning response is helpful for clarification, and in emergencies it is needed.

Warning, Admonishing Response. "You had better," "If you don't" "You have to," "You will," "You must" are used constantly in the everyday work

environment. Usually such responses produce resentment, resistance, and rebellion. There are times, of course, when this response is necessary, such as in an emergency situation when the information being given is critical to human welfare.

Logical, Lecturing Response. "Don't you realize....," "Here is where you are wrong ....," "The facts are....," "Yes, but...." can be heard in any discussion with two people of differing opinions. Such responses tend to make the other person feel inferior or defensive. Of course, persuasion is part of the world we live in. In general, however, we need to trust that when people are given correct and full data they will make logical decisions for themselves.

Devaluation Response. "It's not so bad," Don't worry," "You'll get over it, or "Oh, you don't feel that way" are familiar phrases used in responding to others' emotions. A listener should recognize the sender's feelings, and should not try to take away the feeling or deny them to the owner. In our desire to alleviate emotional pain, we apply bandages too soon and possibly in the wrong place.

Communication blocks will occur whenever a listener's responses convey non-acceptance of the speaker's feelings.

Our normal response to most of the above messages is to want to change the speaker, not to trust him or her, or to use defense mechanisms such as withdrawal, rationalization, or blaming others, and to reject the role of listener.

> What implications do these responses have to us as persons who want to communicate more effectively? Should we perhaps talk less and listen more?

NOTES:

REACTION TO PRAISE

Group Leader:

In the previous project you were asked to list the characteristics of the other members of your team. You probably noticed that all of these were positive qualities. One of the key ingredients necessary for building a cohesive team spirit in an organization is to look for the positive qualities in others and disregard their negative characteristics.

Discuss:

1. How did you feel when receiving these compliments? (each person share)

2. Did any of the characteristics you used to describe each other surprise anyone? If so, why?

3. One participant said, "When someone compliments me, it encourages me to improve myself to live up to the compliment." Can this backfire if it is not sincere or too vague?

4. In a study conducted by a major U.S. corporation, three million dollars was invested to learn how to improve productivity. The results were startling. Expect and appreciate a job well done. Be sure the employee knows what is expected of him/her and the progress they are making.

NOTES:

SUPERVISOR/MANAGEMENT MODEL

Group leader:

1. What are some difficult supervisor-employee situations that arise in your place of work? Which one seems to be of most concern?

2. I need two group members to volunteer to be participants in a role-play exercise. (Choose two, if there are no volunteers.)

   One is a supervisor and one is an employee. The two participants need to move close to each other and be on eye level. They are to act out the most difficult supervisor-employee situations as decided upon above. (Allow about four minutes for the interaction.) The rest of the group listen and observe verbal messages as well as non-verbal behavior.

   a. What did the supervisor do that was effective?
      What are some other ways of handling the situation and what effects would each have?

   b. How can conflicts be minimized?

Notes:

GOSSIP OR COMMUNICATION

Game Rules

1. Everyone gossips. If you've listened, it's the same.
2. No one ever asks if the information is true.
3. The greater the potential damage, the faster it travels.
4. The more you try to tell people that the gossip is not true, the more they believe it is. To rid yourself of a gossip's results, you'll have to have a new form of communication.
5. Major decisions have been based on gossip.
6. Of all forms of communication, gossip is the most easily distorted. Remember the game called "secret" you played as a child?
7. People gossip in order to protect their own reputations.
8. The more demeaning or hurtful the longer it takes for the victim to hear about it.
9. Gossip tends to thrive in an atmosphere of secrecy and competition.

What Is Gossip?

"Story" in general circulation without certainty as to its truth thrives best when there is an absence of firm evidence emotion of the moment. Gossip tends to abate more easily with time: rumors can linger on forever.

Gossip Affects Three People

1. Object of the gossip
2. Creator of the gossip
3. Person who repeats it

If a person has a good "self image" there will be no need to put someone else down with gossip. Not all Gossip is Negative.

Focus on positive attributes, do not refute gossip. (Force the speaker to discuss your friend's positive traits. Turn the conversation back to the "good" about your company.)

NON-VERBAL EVALUATION

Communication involves much more than words. Behind the words often lies feelings. The following are some typical messages that we send. Individually, read each separately, try to listen carefully for feelings. Then in the right-hand column, write the feeling you heard. Discard the content and write only a feeling word.

Person says:		Feeling Expressed
1.	Sometimes I feel like quitting this job, especially since nobody seems to care whether I stay or not.	_____
2.	My boss is so inconsiderate!	_____
3.	How dare she show her face around here after what she did!	_____
4.	I just wish I could do something interesting for a change!	_____
5.	The vacation was the best thing that ever happened to me.	_____
6.	One minute Joe says, "We'll go," and the next minute he says, "Let's stay home."	_____
7.	I need this job and it looks like someone will be laid off. I hope it won't be me!	_____
8.	Betty, Tom, Mary and Joyce are all going, but I wasn't invited.	_____
9.	I got a big promotion today!	_____
10.	Leave me alone!	_____
11.	I have been so upset! What am I going to do?	_____
12.	I work hard at trying to be fair with my employees, and now Mrs. Smith says I'm inconsiderate!	_____
13.	If she would only pay attention to me!	_____
14.	That phone rang constantly all day!	_____
15.	It was a great day! Joan got a raise and Jim was elected to the National Honor Society!	_____

Source: Compiled using the 1984 Organizational Conflict survey data.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION

ON THE JOB

Group Leader

Employees like to feel appreciated.

1. Each member of the group should jot down two lists of items. One list should contain behaviors that would motivate employees to do their best. The other list should contain behaviors that would discourage employees from doing their best.

ENCOURAGE: DISCOURAGE:

2. Discuss lists and share ideas.

3. Spend a minute or two of private time and identify three personal areas that you would specifically like to improve upon.

   1.
   2.
   3.

COMMUNICATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Which of the following do you feel represents your biggest problem in communications? (Check only one.)

_____1. Making yourself understood.

_____2. Writing an interesting letter.

_____3. Telling a funny story well.

_____4. Presenting your ideas in a clear, forceful manner.

_____5. Making a good speech before people.

_____6. Listening.

_____7. Making snappy comebacks and saying witty things.

2. You go to the boss to discuss an important problem on your job. The boss keeps answering the telephone, shuffling correspondence on the desk, and looking at the clock. You feel: (Check one.)

_____1. Sorry for the boss because there is so much to do.

_____2. Like saying "Be quiet and listen to me."

_____3. That this is part of the business world.

_____4. As if the boss does not think you are important.

3. You are concerned about the attitude and personality of one of your children. You have been talking with a friend who had a similar child and the child ended up in the care of a psychologist. You start discussing the problem with your spouse, but the spouse is upset with you about an argument the day before so just stares out the window and ignores you. You feel: (Check one.)

_____1. Irate.

_____2. Perhaps this is a problem you should shoulder alone.

_____3. Your spouse is unreasonable.

_____4. Sympathetic with your spouse's feelings.

4. Write down the names of three people whom you consider to be good listeners:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

RULE 1:
ACT LIKE A LISTENER

To BE a good listener you must ACT like a good listener.

To ACT like a good listener you should:

1. Maintain good eye contact.

2. Sit attentively. Even lean forward at times.

3. Look as if you are enjoying listening. Raise eyebrows, nod head, smile, and laugh when appropriate.

4. Ask questions. Give encouragement to talker with questions.

5. Appear alert but not tense. Be patient, relaxed; but eyes, posture, and attitude should be one of interest, focusing all attention on the one talking.

6. React. This is important. People like applause, attention, recognition. You can give this to the one talking by making verbal comments like:

"I see."
"That's interesting."
"I never knew that."
"Oh!"
"Is that right!"

Now let's practice these characteristics. Pair off in groups of two members. One of you spend three minutes telling about what you did yesterday. No detail is too small to overlook! The one listening practice the good listening habits above.

At the end of three minutes, reverse and do the same thing. The one listening becomes the talker and the talker becomes the listener.

NOTES: _____

RULE 2:
LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

It is not enough that you simply ACT like a good listener. You MUST BE a good listener. A good listener listens to understand, really understand, what the other person is saying. Most people do not communicate. They take turns talking. People may act like listeners but might really just be thinking of what they are going to say when it is their turn to talk.

To understand you must:

1. Ask questions: (How? What? Where? When? Who?)

Examples:
How did you do that?
What did you do?
Where did you do that?
When was that?
Who did it?

2. Get more information:
"Tell me more about that."

3. Let the talker know you are not informed on subject:
"I don't know much about this."
"I have never been there."
"I have not heard of that before."

4. Give feedback:
"Is this what you mean?" Repeat what has been said putting into your own words.

"Do I understand this correctly?" Repeat as above.

Practice listening to understand by doing what you did in the project above. Pair off; each talk for 3 minutes, only this time describe a trip you have taken. Let the listener practice getting every detail of the trip out of you.

NOTES: _____

Rule 6: *Act.*

Start acting on the solution. Keep in mind that more problems are unsolved by no decision than by wrong decisions.

Why are problems unsolved?

Fear of results.

Human behavior: procrastination, indifference, lack of desire, laziness.

Solution involves other people. Fear of their reactions.

Lack of confidence in the solution or your ability to solve it.

Solution involves certain risks that you are not willing to take.

Solution involves change: situation or ourselves.

The solution would require more effort than the problem calls for (the problem is not serious enough to motivate you to solve it.)

Each of you go back to the list of problems you wrote down at the beginning of the session. How many of those problems are you doing nothing about for one or more of the reasons above? Discuss with other members.

NOTES: _____

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